

lied on simple, naked truth. For his messengers he chose mortals encompassed with infirmities, and sent them out. He saw the scorn, the opposition, the cruelty of the world, but never trembled nor doubted. He said to his messengers, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Jesus was a young man, only thirty-three years of age, when He was put to death. Until He was thirty he pursued the vocation of a mechanic. He spent but three years in His public ministry. He was born in indigence and had no educational advantages. Other great teachers have devoted years to travel, study, investigation, and reflection before they were prepared to make public their opinions. They have sat at the feet of great masters and copied great models. They have dwelt long on the particular topics concerning which they propose to teach. Jesus never traveled abroad, and called in no teachers to prepare Him for His great work. He spake on the most sublime and important subjects, not in studied discourse, but in common conversation. He spake without premeditation in answer to questions propounded by friends and foes alike. Yet His words, uttered on the spur of the moment, are so true, so just, so beautiful that they stand forever. This youth, teaching under circumstances most unfavorable, gave to the world the moral precepts which for beauty, sublimity, force and utility stands without a parallel in all the realms of literature.

It is not enough to invite sinners to accept salvation. The church should compel them to come in. Our Lord foresaw the tendency of Christians and Christian churches to settle down into a state of indifference with regard to the unconverted. As a matter of fact, what is the prevailing attitude of Christians toward the unconverted? Do they not content themselves with simply inviting them to come to Christ? Do they not say: "There is ample room in our churches for all, and all are welcome. The pews are comfortable and free. If they do not come it is because they are not disposed to come?" Yes, it is because they are not disposed to come. And for this very reason our Lord said, "Compel them." Conquer their prejudices, overcome their reluctance, compel them to surrender to God. Not by carnal weapons, but by prayer, by persuasion, by song, by united and persevering effort, and by love, compel them to come in.

Christians should diligently seek to bring their neighbors to Christ, because without Him they are lost. Say what we will and believe as we may about future punishment, we cannot escape the fact that sinners are being punished now. Whatever may be their lot in the world to come, they have a hard lot in this world. "The way of the transgressor is hard." Some dispute this

proposition. They say: "There is no difference between the righteous and the wicked. It is a vain thing to serve the Lord. The righteous often suffer poverty and affliction, while the wicked are in great prosperity." This is true, but the end is not yet. A man was hanged the other day in a certain city, but it was not right living and good character that brought him to the gallows. Thousands of young men are in prison today, but they do not owe their downfall to a life of obedience to the laws of God. "The wages of sin is death." The wicked are lost even while they live. Let no one dream that they shall be better off after they die. If wicked men are in perdition even here on account of their evil ways, it is unreasonable to suppose that they shall escape by death. The fires that torment the wicked in this world are an admonition of the tendency of evil. If the way be dark and hard, what must the end to which it leads be? The same revelation which assures us that the reward of righteousness is life everlasting also assures us, in language quite as explicit, that the reward of sin is everlasting punishment. For this reason Christians should be diligent to save the lost. Pull them out of the fire.

THE STRENGTH OF HUMILITY.—Luke 18: 9-14

Topic, Feb. 18.

The ancient Christian father Tertullian once said, "If I was asked what is the greatest virtue of Christian life I would answer humility, and the second greatest; humility, and the third greatest; humility." If humility be lacking every other grace is spoiled like works without love. It is the salt of the virtues. The promises of God to the humble are abundant and should be sought out in this lesson. But God has never judged by the standards of men. The high and mighty of the world may be very insignificant in God's sight. He can bring down a Nebuchadnezzar or exalt a Daniel as he pleases. He chooses the weak things of this world to confound the mighty and by the "foolishness of preaching" rather than the wisdom of learning he brings salvation near. Socrates points out that it is the tall things that are struck by lightning rather than the humble things on the ground and the tall trees break before the storm while the humble grasses bend and are saved. Solomon observed that "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall" and the Savior gave the first beatitude for the humble saying "theirs is the kingdom of God" and instituted an ordinance with this as one of its lessons. It deserves to be thus perpetuated for pride is one of the commonest and greatest sins in the church and out. We can well afford to study the topic well.

THE SCRIPTURES ON HUMILITY.

1. Humility commanded, Jas. 4: 10; I Pet. 5: 6.
2. A factor in prayer, Ps 9: 12. Isa 57: 15.
3. A source of strength, Prov. 29: 23.
4. Grace for the humble, Jas 4: 6; I Pet. 5: 5.
5. A way out of trouble, Prov. 6: 3.
6. A way to be exalted, Matt. 18: 4; Lk. 14: 11.
7. Humility and riches, Prov. 22: 4.
8. Humility and the kingdom, Matt. 5: 3.

Let some one comment on each of the following scriptures with reference to the subject. I Cor. 1: 27-31. II Cor. 12: 9. 10. Luke 7: 28. Matt. 18: 28. Matt. 5: 3.

QUESTIONS.

1. What reasons are there why we should be humble? Ps. 103: 13-16.
2. How did Jesus give us an example in humility?

Matt. 20: 28; Jno. 13.

3. What can we learn on humility from the example of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4) and Belshazzar. Dan 5: 18-24

4. What do we mean by "strength of humility"?

5. What can we learn from the example of Solomon? II Chron. 34: 27, 28; I Kings 11: 9-11.

6. How do we sometimes show lack of humility?

7. How does the ordinance of feet-washing help humility in the churches which practice it?

8. Tell of some noted examples of the strength of humility.

9. How can children cultivate humility?

10. How does Bible reading, church attendance, prayer meetings, etc, help the grace of humility?

C F YODER.

The Christian Life

The Answer

"Before they call, I will answer!"

And can it be that Thou didst know

And plan for me so long ago

And made it best

That when all anxiously I prayed,

The raging of the tumult stayed

And I found rest?

Yes, Thou hast said, before we pray

Not only dost not say me nay,

But in delight

Hast called from out infinitude

A tender grand and sweet prelude

For this glad night.

Lord, with new faith I wait the morn

When all the joys and hopes, Heaven born,

Shall culminate.

When we our loving Lord shall see,

When we shall be fore'er with Thee,

Past Heaven's gate

—Elizabeth Perry Howland

KEEP YOUR LIGHT BURNING

MARCUS A. WITTER

One cold dark night a few weeks ago an old resident of Donegal, Pa., became temporarily insane and wandered aimlessly around in the night. His son and neighbors lighted lanterns and began a diligent search for the afflicted old man that they might bring him home where he would be protected from the cold.

During the search his son followed him to a deep ravine, an abandoned railway cut, and thinking that his father might be in this place he held the lantern high above his head and peered eagerly into the darkness calling him to come. While he was thus standing and calling his lantern was in some way extinguished and he was left in the dark. It was some time before he succeeded in relighting it for the wind was high.

When at last it burned brightly, he resumed the search but it was not until the next day that they found the poor old man with his face and hands torn by briars and thorn bushes and frozen by the sharp winter wind.

In his wandering he had fallen in a stream of water. His clothes had become drenched and then frozen. He had lost his hat and one of his shoes and when found was so weak that he had to be helped back to his home.

When his reason partially returned, he told the story of his nights wanderings. "For a while," he said, "I avoided you and turned away from the lanterns, but when I was in